



**Martin O'Malley, Governor Anthony Brown, Lieutenant Governor
Israel C. Patoka, Executive Director**

**Governor's Commission on Caribbean Affairs
Curtis A. Ward, Chair**

The Governor's Commission on Caribbean Affairs serves as an advisory body to the Governor and agencies within the Executive Department on matters relating to the Caribbean population of Maryland, including matters relating to economic, workforce and business development. The Commission will identify needs or problems affecting the Caribbean population and develop appropriate responses and strategies.

For immediate release

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Governor O'Malley Signs Order Creating Caribbean Affairs Commission

New Commission will be housed in Office of Community Initiatives

Annapolis, MD (June 6, 2012) Governor Martin O'Malley was joined by Lt. Governor Anthony Brown for the signing of Executive Order 01.01.2012.11, creating the first Governor's Commission on Caribbean Affairs in Maryland history. During an afternoon signing ceremony in the Governor's Reception Room, the Governor announced the appointment of Curtis A. Ward as Commission Chair. He is a former Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative of Jamaica to the United Nations Security Council and a former Expert Adviser to the United Nations Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC). Ward is of Jamaican descent and resides in Montgomery County.

The nine-member Commission will advise the Governor on issues affecting the Caribbean community including healthcare, business, workforce and economic development. The interview process is still underway for the remaining members of the Commission and no official appointments other than the Chair have been made at this time. The membership will reflect the diverse ancestry and national origins of the state's Caribbean community and will provide statewide representation from different geographic regions. Jessy Mejia will serve as Assistant Director of the Commission. According to the 2008-2010 American Community Survey, close to 60,000 Caribbeans now call Maryland home.

"In Maryland, we are blessed to have a vibrant Caribbean community that's thriving, growing and helping our State move forward every day. To better serve this community,

we have chosen – together with Lt. Governor Brown – to create a dedicated commission to focus on the specific needs of the Caribbean Americans in Maryland,” said Governor O’Malley. “We will focus our work in this new Commission on community development issues, and our Commissioners will serve as advisors on all issues related to the Caribbean community.”

Lt. Governor Brown’s father came to America from Jamaica to escape poverty. He was able to receive a high quality education and became a doctor, serving some of the poorest residents of the community.

In creating the Governor’s Commission on Caribbean Affairs, the O’Malley-Brown administration wants emphasize its commitment to the Caribbean people of Maryland. To insure that matters of importance to the community are addressed by the highest levels of government, the commission will be housed in the Governor’s Office of Community Initiatives.

The Governor’s Office of Community Initiatives (GOCI) coordinates outreach to ethnic, cultural, and faith-based communities as well as to local government organizations across Maryland. GOCI is home to the Governor's Commission on African Affairs, the Governor's Commission on African American History and Culture, the Maryland Commission on Indian Affairs, and the Governor's Commission on Hispanic Affairs, Middle Eastern Affairs and the Governor's Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs. The activities and programs of the Banneker-Douglass Museum in Annapolis are also coordinated through the Governor's Office of Community Initiatives.

GOCI coordinates community and volunteer activities statewide and advises the Governor on policies to enhance and improve community programs. The office also includes the work of the Governor’s Office on Service and Volunteerism, Volunteer Maryland, and the Governor’s Intergovernmental Affairs Office.

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